



## **IDAHO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION**

P.O. Box 167 • 500 West Washington  
Boise, Idaho 83701-0167 • (208) 342-2688  
FAX (208) 342-8585

RECEIVED BY U.S. FISH  
AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
GRIZZLY BEAR RECOVERY  
COORDINATORS OFFICE.

October 21, 1997

OCT 27 1997

Dr. Christopher Servheen  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Project Leader  
P.O. Box 5127  
Missoula, Mt. 59806

Re: Grizzly Bear Recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Dr. Servheen:

The Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, representing over 47,000 member families has reviewed the proposal for reestablishment of the grizzly bear in the Bitterroot ecosystem in Idaho and want you and the USFWS to know we are totally opposed to any reintroduction, reestablishment or artificial imposition of the grizzly bear into Idaho. We particularly oppose the proposed action (Alternative 1) as identified in the DEIS for the following reasons.

1. The identified habitat in the recovery area is insufficient to achieve grizzly population recovery. The high country wilderness area is particularly lacking in spring range and will lead to transplanted grizzlies moving out of the area to better habitat at lower elevations. This will lead to encounters with humans and livestock.
2. The proposed recovery area south of the Salmon River has not been analyzed for suitability of grizzly bears. This constitutes a procedural violation of NEPA.
3. It appears grizzly bear recovery will adversely affect salmon and steelhead recovery and be in conflict with NMFS goals and objectives for salmonid recovery under the Endangered Species Act.
4. The Citizen Management Committee has no real delegation of authority under this proposal and this entire section should be re-written to give Idaho managers actual

management authority.

5. Funding for management/monitoring is not guaranteed and will probably not be available once introductions have occurred. An example of the lack of commitment by USFWS is taking place in the wolf recovery effort in Idaho. The Nez Perce tribe monitoring effort is being withdrawn because of a lack of payment to the tribe for the service. We envision grizzly monitoring would fall under the same circumstance if bears were ever introduced.

4

6. We strongly object to the pie in the sky estimate that grizzly bear recovery would somehow net 40 to 60 million dollars per year to the state and only cost \$393,632 per year. We believe the estimates to be flawed and biased to show the public that grizzlies promote economic growth which is totally imaginary and demonstrates USFWS should confine their comments to the field they are trained in, namely wildlife management.

7. We strongly object to the impact findings that grizzly bears will pose a minimal risk to humans. We read these fine projections by grizzly enthusiasts and listen intently to college students testifying to their willingness to share their world with the grizzly, but the fact is that the grizzly bear is a vicious, unpredictable, very large and mean critter that will attack without provocation. Livestock loses, and human attacks will occur and projections of one injury per year do not even add up for this year. 2 rangers had to use pepper spray to ward off two different bears in Yellowstone park, a mauling occurred in Montana of a bowhunter, 2 Idaho hunters were mauled in Alaska and not one of these occurrences were provoked by humans. Grizzlies and humans do not mix well and yet the USFWS is insisting that they will make sure such encounters will occur by bringing this vicious animal to Idaho.

5

8. We strongly object to closures of roads, hunting restrictions, mining restrictions, logging restrictions and access restrictions that grizzly bears will bring to the state of Idaho. USFWS and a few grizzly enthusiast talk about bringing our heritage back to the state so that we can experience the past. Our heritage is also built upon unrestricted access to our back country and multiple uses of our public lands. Grizzlies might reintroduce us to the concept of fear for our lives on camping trips, but they will rob from us a greater heritage and that is multiple use of our public lands and unrestricted access to our back country and wild areas.

In closing the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation would like the USFWS to know that we firmly and completely back our Governor and Congressional Delegation in opposing any reintroduction of Grizzly Bears into the state of Idaho. We further recommend that the DEIS be withdrawn and this absurd idea of imposing a vicious killer on the citizens of Idaho be terminated. This proposal is not necessary, for the grizzly is alive and well in North America and need not be imposed upon the citizens of Idaho.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this most distressing proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Geary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Geary" clearly legible.

Tom Geary, President  
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

cc: Governor Phil Batt  
Senator Larry Craig  
Senator Dirk Kempthorne  
Congressman Helen Chenoweth  
Congressman Mike Crapo  
IFBF Officers, Directors and Staff  
IFBF County Presidents